



**After three movies, The Man Of Steel said he had hung up his cape for good...**

# WHY SUPERMAN BROKE HIS WORD

SUPERMAN has matured. Instead of a quick hop before hurtling through space faster than a speeding bullet, the Man Of Steel takes three steps. The familiar baby curl on his forehead has disappeared.

But more importantly, the caped crusader has gone anti-nuclear.

It was the only way Christopher Reeve would come back for a fourth dose as the superhero who saves the world.

After three Superman movies in six years, Christopher had vowed: "I wouldn't do another for all the money in the world."

But four years after publicly ending his association with the comic-book hero, Christopher Reeve is sitting in an oversized, pink director's chair with his name emblazoned across the back, inside a British studio. He is dressed in a familiar blue body-suit, with a vivid scarlet cape and distinctive "S" logo on his chest.

"I have been made to eat my

words," Christopher says with a grimace.

"I felt after Superman III that if ever we did this again we would have to make it more realistic. Then I worked on a documentary with 12-year-olds where they talk about their fears of growing up in a nuclear age.

"I had an image of Superman addressing the United Nations on nuclear arms and it suddenly seemed to me that another Superman movie could be worthwhile."

Chris told the producers the outline of his anti-nuclear plot and they loved it. Then he went to Vermont on a skiing holiday and spent 10 days at the typewriter.

He handed his notes over to the scriptwriters and every six weeks, between other film commitments, met with them "to put it into order".

Chris also insisted on total control over what Superman says and does.

The producers — overwhelmed that the actor who had successfully

ABOVE: The familiar, but slightly older face of Superman, as portrayed by Christopher Reeve, will soon grace cinema screens again.

RIGHT: Christopher Reeve has a greater say in the production of Superman's fourth screen epic.

brought the cartoon hero alive and drawn millions at the box-office would actually play the role again — agreed to everything.

The result is that not an inch of footage is shot without Christopher giving his nod of approval. He personally directs some scenes and oversees most of the rest with director Sydney Furie.

For Christopher, Superman is far more than just another well-paid acting job. He is quite sincere when he talks of it as his "baby".

"I feel a responsibility for Superman, morally speaking. I am interested in the spiritual, moral side of Superman," he says.

"What motivates me to play the part is what Superman symbolises, the idealism he communicates. I am more interested in Superman





"I don't mean to sound self-important, but many people don't understand how difficult it is not to be ridiculous in the part.

"The potential to be ludicrous in this costume is awesome," he adds with a laugh.

"Everyone has their image of what Superman should be like. It's hard to be all things to all people. Imagine trying to play Santa Claus. You are messing around with people's fantasies."

Superman IV, with its budget of \$50 million, sees the return of Gene Hackman as arch-villain Lex Luthor — this time a nuclear arms entrepreneur — and Margot Kidder as reporter Lois Lane.

Mariel Hemingway is a newcomer as Lucy Warfield who, as the daughter of the Daily Planet's new proprietor, falls for the bungling charm of Clark Kent.

And the film sees the debut of Christopher's own two children, Matthew, 7, and Alexandra, 2. He rescues them from a tornado, scooping them up into his powerful arms and flying them to safety.

"They loved doing it," Christopher says.

"I think Matthew sees Superman as a fun part of our lives. He has seen me play so many different characters I don't think he finds anything unusual in Daddy dressing up in a cape and boots at work."

Christopher is a devoted family man. He has been with beautiful British model Gae Exton for 10 years, but they don't plan to wed.

Gae and Christopher live simply in a plain-fronted terrace house in London with their children. Christopher commutes to work in America, where they also have a plush New York apartment and a farm in Massachusetts.

*From Bunty Avieson  
in London*

## 6 The potential to be ludicrous in this costume is awesome 9

as a leader, as a gentleman, and an example. I am bored with car crashes and into the romance. I think he is needed."

Of all the characters he has played during his varied career, Christopher, 34, still considers Superman the hardest because of the credibility gap.

RIGHT: Even the film crew can be amazed by the feats of Superman as he flies up, and away.

